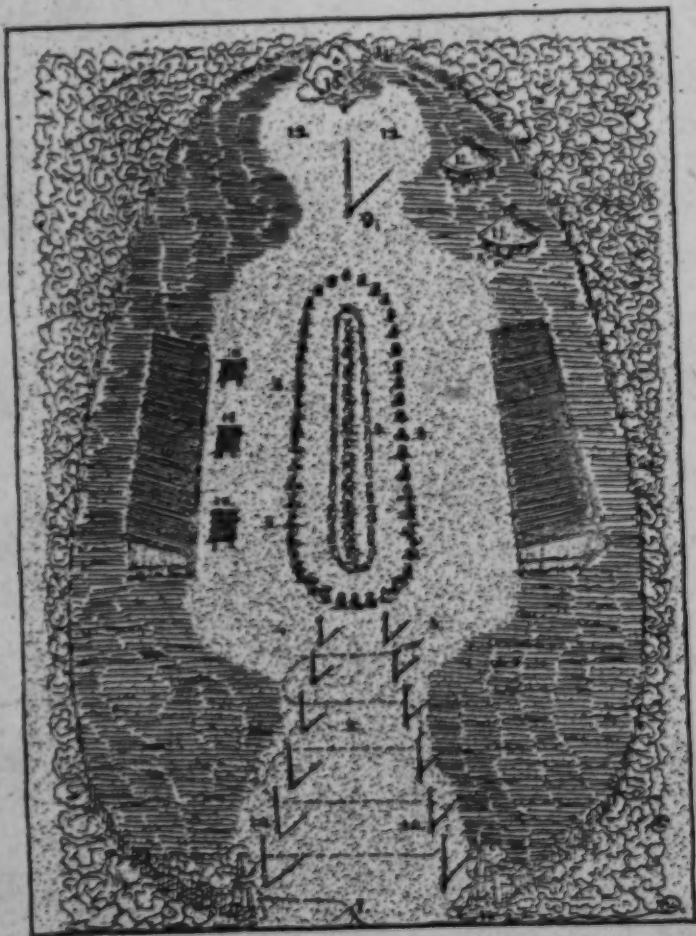


349 and not the candidates' gate, which is on the opposite side (4).
881 Further on is the central court of the sungi, with the long fireplace
644 built with stones and called the Elephant (5) round which the boys
 must sit (8), warming their right hips at the fire. The uterine



Plan of the circumcision lodge.

Drawn by J. W. 1927.

[344]
88/ 349 nephew of the chief, the son of his sister, who takes precedence in all the rites, and who is the first to be circumcised, sits on a special stone with the others behind him. He is called the *Hwentye*. Near the fireside are the tables made of hurdles of reeds on which the porridge of the boys is served every day (15). The central court is occupied on both sides by two square sheds hastily and roughly built, the one on the right (7) being the hut of the shepherds and of the men, the one on the left (6) the hut of the circumcised. The soil is not smeared in these houses. Some of the men also sleep in separate huts behind (11). It is behind the Elephant that the big Mulagaru pole will be raised at the close of the school (9). Further at the back of the sungi is the place of the *formulæ* where the boys are taught (12). A tree sometimes grows in the middle and the instructor climbs up it to impart his teaching (10).

I have drawn this plan of the sungi with the help of Viguet. Having never seen it with my own eyes, I cannot guarantee that it does not omit many details... But it is correct as a whole.

88/ The inmates of the lodge fall into three categories: 1. the "bukwera" viz. the troop of candidates who are to be initiated; 2. the shepherds (*barisi* or *psitjiba*, the boys who light (*tjibela*) the fire of the Elephant) who waken the circumcised in the morning, accompany them on their hunting trips, watch them when they eat, etc. 3. The grown up men who have volunteered to come and stay in the sungi during the whole school. They eat the flesh of the animals killed by the bukwera, carve pestles, weave baskets, enjoy themselves, and form the council which looks after the well-being of the school. Amongst them are the so-called father and mother of the Ngoma, two men who are specially in charge of the school. The "father" has a difficult task; he must keep discipline, administer punishment, etc. These two men are paid, as are also the Lion-men and the Manyabe. The Manyabe is the great doctor of the school. He has poured his charms on the fence to protect the lodge against wizards. He does not stay in the sungi, but can be called at any time to administer medicine to the boys who are unwell or whose wounds do not heal properly.

836 of rattles, they sometimes stay with them till late in the night.
832 They bring them small presents, articles of clothing or other things, and thus obtain permission to have intercourse with them. Mboza described to me a very immoral meeting which sometimes takes place in these huts in connection with the *milebe* habit, and which is connected with this gangisa. It is impossible to give the details here. (Annotatio 5.)²

836 The gangisa custom is, from our point of view, very immoral.
 831 Amongst Natives it is not censured at all, and it would be more accurate to speak of *amorality* than *immorality*, amongst them, on this particular point. A boy who has no such flirt, no *shigango*, is laughed at as a coward; a girl who refuses to accept such advances is accused of being malformed. However Mboza told me he had never had a *shigango* himself and the abuse in this respect is not approved of by old people. In Manyisa, I heard of a young chief who was leading all the lads to gangisa and forcing the girls to accept them. The extent of this evil depends very much on the character of the boys and girls. I may add that, as regards the young people of the capital, they are not allowed to practise the gangisa because they belong to the royal family and are closely watched.

[644] When they become Christians, Natives readily accept our standard of morality, but cases of fornication are very frequent amongst converts, so much so that this has been rightly called the African sin! I mention this fact, but I must say on the other hand that thousands of pupils in our Native Institutions lead a very moral and continent life and do not seem to find any great difficulty in doing so.

839 If the gangisa spoils the whole life of the young heathen, it is
 177 only just to add that they do not practise two vices which are prevalent amongst certain civilised nations, onanism and sodomy. These immoral customs were entirely unknown in the Thonga tribe before the coming of civilisation. Unhappily it is no longer so now, as we shall see in Appendix III on unnatural vice in Johannesburg.

836 Comparing the habits of the Pedis and the Thongas we observe
 837 this strange fact: amongst the Thongas the unmarried girl is

2 [see p. 517 in these categories or 1A 116 -- Analyst]

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644 during the whole of the first year of married life. The chief, immediately on the home-coming of his bride, calls together his young men, who rapidly build for him a new village, his village, which will henceforth become the capital of the country and will be given a distinctive name.

Nwainantibyane's royal kraal was known as Hlanzini, and he had chosen a site for it on the confines of the Nwamba country in order to avoid a too close proximity to the Portuguese Commandant living at Hangwana.

Crowned, married, installed in his new residence, the chief has now nothing to do but reign.

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622 Mankhelu relates the proceedings of the official marriage amongst the Ba-Nkuna in the following manner: — All the principal headmen send an ox to the capital, assemble there, kill one of the oxen, eat it and discuss who shall be the "wife of the country (1)." Then ask the chief: "Whom do you love?" He answers: "The daughter of such and such a chief." They go to the father of this girl and say: "Eat the lobolo and give your daughter to the chief." The man may refuse. Should he consent, the girl will become the wife of the country: "the earth has bought her:" she will give birth to the future chief.

Should a great number of oxen be provided by the country, those which are in excess of the lobola price will go with the chief and princess to their new village "in order to provide milk for them."

(1) In the case of Muhlaba, Mankhelu himself received the fifteen oxen of the lobolo of the village and kept them for a time. Other subjects had given 2 1, a hoe, a goat, or nothing, if they could not afford to contribute. Nobody refused, but some had nothing to give! No matter! In the meantime one of the oxen broke its leg. The mother of Muhlaba said to Mankhelu: "See! the oxen of the lobolo die. Take a wife for the chief." Muhlaba was consulted and chose a girl from the Makaringse clan. Mankhelu had already taken a wife amongst those people, who were consequently his bakokwana. He went to them with the proposal; they consented. Then Muhlaba accompanied Mankhelu on a second visit to the Makaringse people, who killed an ox for him and helped him to eat it.

643 see Part VI) called Madyakakulu, Nwahondyane, Mbengatamilomu,
789 Masemane. The bones are always consulted to ascertain which
751 calabash (nhungubane) must be employed. The uses of this
 medicine are as follows. Every year it is mixed with the first
 fruits in the ceremony of *luma*, which will be described later on.
 In war time the mbhulo is employed to "fence the country."
 Envoys go to all the drifts on the boundary, take stones out of the
 river, smear them with the magical powder and place them on the
 roads, at the crossways; should enemies invade the country, they
 will be deprived of their strength. The weapons also are sprinkled
 with a decoction made of this royal medicine, as we shall see, and it
 is given to the chief to prevent disease. The father of Papalati was

643 accused of having sold some of this powerful national drug
687 to the Pedi chief Sikororo, an act which amounted to high treason.

643 I have been fortunate enough to be informed of all the rites
 connected with the royal medicine in the Mazwaya clan. There, it
 is called *nyokwekulu*, a word which is probably derived from the
 verb *ku nyuka*, to melt. Let Mboza tell us, with awe and profound
 conviction, of the marvels of this wonderful drug. He was present
 at its preparation in the year 1893, before the war scattered the
 clan and destroyed its military power.

644 Each year the *nyokwekulu* is renewed. Its exact composition
789 is known only to one man, Godlela, the royal magician and priest,
 to whom the care of preparing it is entrusted. This man belongs
 to the house, or sub-clan, of *Tlhatlha*. He is very much feared.
 Nobody dares to dispute with him, and he has the right of cursing
 even the chief. His function is *hereditary*. His father Malubatilo
 was in charge of the *nyokwekulu* before him. The law of
 succession is this; when the elder brother dies, the position is
 held by his younger brother. The headmen of the tribe box his
 ears and say to him: "You will be the master of the medicine!
 Take great care of it." When all the brothers are dead, it passes
 to the sons.

So, when the right time of the year has come, the chief
 consults the bones. The first thing to do is to send messengers
 all over the country to find a *forked branch*, a "shiphandje," to
 which the calabash containing the medicines will be hung.

644/789 When they have chosen it—it must be the stem of a nkonono tree—they cut it and bring it back to the capital. In front walks the master of the ceremonies, Godlela, and behind him four men carrying the shiphandje. Those who accompany them have the right of entering the villages and stealing fowls. Woe to those who meet with this troop! They will be relieved of all they carry, "because the forked branch of the great medicine of the chief is taboo."

644/789 The sacred branch having duly reached the capital, Godlela proceeds to the second operation, the *burning of the drugs*. 826 Mboza saw the magician take pieces of skin cut from buffaloes, 237 lions, hyenas, elans, panthers, snakes of various kinds and, last but not least, from the bodies of men, enemies killed in the wars: part of the skin of the forehead, the heart, the diaphragm, the nails, a finger, some ears... All these are roasted in a large pot. On some mats are spread various magical roots 644 cut into small pieces; these are also thrown into the pot. The 789 chief and all the sub-chiefs approach and, with hollow reeds, inhale and swallow the vapour and the smoke which emanates from it (1).

The preparation of the great medicine having been successfully accomplished, the great drum (nhumburi) of the capital is brought on to the square, and everybody dances, even women, who take assagais in their hands and sing: "We are thankful if we die (hi tlangela ku fa)" *viu*, "The country is in security, our invincible medicine is ready! We shall not be killed by enemies but will die a natural death." Before extinguishing the fire which 644 was used to roast the medicines, Godlela takes a little water, 789 pours it on the glowing embers and, when it vaporises with the 782 customary sound, he emits the sacramental *tsu* and prays to his gods, the departed spirits of the Tlhaltha family, as doctors always do, in order to obtain their blessing on the nyokwekulu.

618 (1) The Hlewane sub-clan, which revolted many times against the legal chief and succeeded by its intrigues in provoking the war of 1894, after which it became the reigning family of Nondwane, used to abstain from participating in this "swallowing of the snake," because, in former years, it had been defeated by Maphunga's people and some of its men killed; their flesh had been used in the concoction of the nyokwekulu. So they feared to go and inhale the odour of their fellow clansmen.

CHAPTER III

THE COURT AND TRIBUNAL.

644 Although Royalty makes but little display amongst the Ba-Ronga, still each chief is the centre of a court of more or less brilliancy.

A. THE VILLAGE OF THE CHIEF.

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466 The village in which he resides is not called *muti* (as is the case with the ordinary hamlets of his subjects), but *ntsindja*, that is "the capital." It is generally larger than the ordinary villages, is built by the young men of the tribe, after the marriage of the chief, and is also kept in repair by them, one of their principal duties being to keep the public square in a state of constant cleanliness and to weed it at certain seasons of the year.

644 One of my countrymen, Dr. J. de Montmollin, visited the capital of the Tembe clan in July 1900 and took some interesting photographs of it. The whole village was surrounded by a high and thorny circular fence, much stronger than is the case with ordinary kraals. The inside of the fence was divided into two parts; the front part, to which the main entrance gave access, and the back part with the huts of the queens. The front part was the square (*hubo* and *bandla*) with shady trees, under which visitors were sitting; there was only one hut on it, on the left side near the fence; the back part comprised the huts of the queens, which were separated from the square by a high wall of reeds, carefully built, and in which only a few narrow entrances were left. The traveller was told that access to this kind of gynecium was taboo for all

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Phot. IX J. de Montmollin.

Main gate of the Tembe capital.



Phot. IX J. de Montmollin.

The "hubo," square of the Tembe capital
(The huts of the queens in the background, behind the road wall).

the men. However he was allowed to visit it. Behind these huts were two passages between poles carefully arranged, one leading to the pig-sties, another to the bush. The photographer was told that this was intended to secure an exit for the queens in case of war... I suppose it had a more common and practical use in every day life! They are the *pairuba* of the queens (p. 311). In the royal kraal these back entrances are taboo.

It is on the square that the men of the neighbourhood love



Back gate with hen-house.

Phot. D' J. de Montrolli

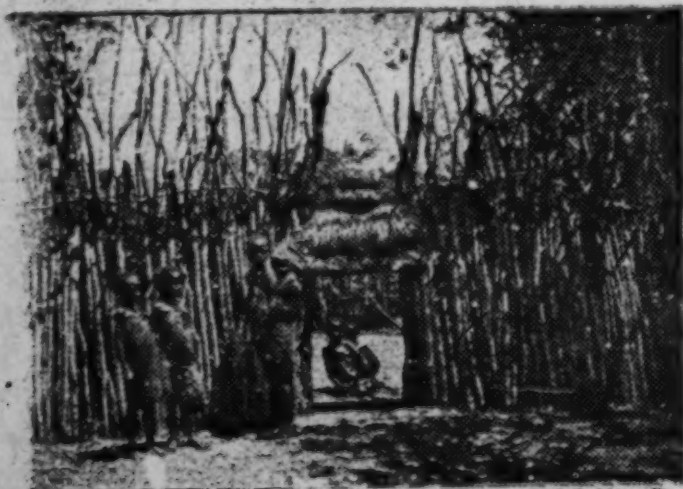
to meet in the morning, when they come to pay their respects to the chief; they sit down in groups and discuss the news of the day; this is called, as we have seen, "*ku ya bandla*," "to go to the men's square." Everyone is welcome there, not only members of the reigning family, but also those of the *glans* conquered by the present chiefs, (as the *Honwana*, *Mahlangwane* etc., in *Nondwane*. Page 357). There is no lack of beer, made from maize or millet, when crops have been good, the women frequently bringing brimming jars to the capital; the daily visits of the men are not therefore altogether disinterested.

B. COURT PERSONAGES.

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Amongst those most frequently seen at the Court, must be mentioned the Counsellors, the Favourites, the Herald and the Official Vituperator.

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Phot. Dr J. de Meunier.

Rach gate.

! The Counsellors.

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The Counsellors, tindjuna (1), constitute a Cabinet which assists the chief in carrying on the functions of Royalty. There are several grades of these functionaries; first the Principal Counsellors (letikulu) whose province it is to discuss and decide

(1) The Zulu word *induna* is well known and has been more or less adopted in current speech in South Africa. The Thonga form is *adjuna*, pl. *tindjuna*. I employ both these forms indiscriminately.

645 If these men are intelligent, they acquire great influence with the chief and may even be able to impose their will upon him. This was the case in September 1894, when the young king Nwamantibyane was prevented by his counsellors from obeying the summons of the Portuguese Government, who claimed his assistance in fighting Mahazule (Sec App. XI). They often act as a useful counterpoise to the autocratic power of the chief.

Lastly we find another category of Counsellors, those appointed by the chief in the various districts to act as overseers or magistrates, to adjudicate the petty differences of the people; they must refer to the capital all important affairs (*timhaka*), the quarrels which the head of the village is unable to settle, and all matters which can only be judged by the chief, to whom they are of the greatest assistance in his decisions, being past masters in the art of Bantu reasoning.

The tindjuna are thus a complete organisation, as necessary to the chief as they are to the orderly development of tribal life.

II. *The Favourites, or Messengers.*

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177 When the chief is crowned while still young, he gathers around him a circle of personal friends of his own age who are called *tinxekua*. This is a Zulu word, and it would seem that this custom has been borrowed from the Zulu court procedure. In Ronga they are called *tinyumi*, which means messengers, and they generally build a *lao*, viz., a bachelor's house, near the capital, to be ready to answer any call. They partake in the games of their royal comrade and also in his feasts, but they have no official authority.

III. *The Herald.*

On one occasion I happened to be the guest, together with one of my colleagues, of the chief Nwamantibyane, long before there was any question of the war of Lourenço Marques. Stretched in

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our hammocks, which we had fixed to the roof inside a hut placed at our disposal for the night, we were trying to sleep when, about 4 a. m., we were awakened by an extraordinary sound; it was in a very high key, words sung, shouted, volubly and monotonously, in fact a most peculiar and never-to-be-forgotten musical production! Further sleep was impossible, and for more than half an hour we were obliged to submit to this ear-splitting performance:

"Yethi (Bayete), we hosi, wene shitlangu sho ringana tilo, mathathala i tinyeleti, nkungu wa shone i hweti! We! nkandji wa ku wona, ku baleka minambyana!" — "Bahete! O chief! You shield us as heaven! The marks of this shield are like the stars! You who trample dry ground so that rivers at once spring forth!"

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It was the *mbongi wa ku pfusha*, the herald sounding the reveille; an individual who has "the chest well developed," as they say in Ronga, which does not mean that he is sound in the wind and possesses healthy lungs, but that he is a man of great eloquence. In our tribe the chest (pectus) is held to be the seat of knowledge and of the gift of oratory! Every morning, before sunrise, this royal flatterer comes to the door of the chief's hut and sings the glorious deeds of his ancestors, recalling their names and acts of prowess; to these praises, he adds a general disparagement (*sandja*) of the chief himself, referring to him as a coward, a child in comparison with his father, his grandfather and all his noble deceased progenitors. "Lead us to battle! Show us what you can do!" And the chief must be awakened every day by this strange concert, which sometimes lasts for hours!

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The flatterer likes to accompany his chief when he goes to visit the Whites. In front of the offices of the Municipal Council of Lourenço Marques, I once witnessed the arrival of Sigaole, chief of Matjolo, who came thither to look at Gunganyana, taken prisoner by the Portuguese in January 1896; his *mbongi* was among his following. This was an old man, named Mabobo. Dressed up in a jacket, by no means too clean, and with a cap on his head, he yelled the praises of the royal family of Matjolo; this was in Zulu and doubtless in a special terminology.

644 He shouted like a madman and no one took the slightest notice of him!

When the chief kills an ox and possibly some little delay occurs in distributing the meat, the *mbongi* is the duly qualified beggar who goes to claim the soldiers' share. He addresses the chief much as follows: "Don't you see all those men in your village? Are they not dogs? Why do you starve us? You only give meat to the women... Is it women who will defend you when the enemies attack you? etc. etc." At the coronation of the chiefs it is this herald who sings their praises in the procession I have already described. Strange to say, the *mbongi* is allowed great licence and may even insult the chief without provoking his anger; on the contrary, the herald is respected and a special portion of meat is reserved for him. Any one can aspire to the office provided he be sufficiently garrulous.

The most eloquent of the Thonga heralds whom I ever met is Mawewe, the *mbongi* of the Nkuna clan. He was an elderly man in 1900 and had a long career behind him, having been the *mbongi* of Manukosi. "I used to praise him from morn to night (*ndji peta dambu*) and he gave me a heifer as a reward." As the French writer Buffon used to put on his cuffs before writing, so Mawewe, when he intended to praise his chief Muhlaba, adorned himself with the tail of the *nsimango* antelope, with the feathers of the *nkulunkulu* (the bird of the chiefs) and of the eagle, with the skins of snakes, of the reed buck, and of the leopard, and with the nails, teeth, or hair of elephants, rhinoceros and hippopotamus; then he began:

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539 Muhlaba Shiluvane, (1) you are like the rhinoceros who seizes a man, bites him through and through, rolls him over and cuts him in two! You are like the crocodile which lives in water; it bites a man! You are like its claws; it seizes a man by his arms and legs, it drags him into the deep pool to eat him at sunset; it watches over the entrance to prevent other crocodiles from taking its prey... Muhlaba! You are like the ram; when it butts with its head, it knocks a man down; like a goat, like the son of the goat, which is herded by the boys.

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which is very cunning: it pricks up its ears, it prepares itself for
defence, when attacked!

Tail of rainanga, you are like Muhlala, you are of a great beauty,
you are shining inside the forest, the black forest, you are sparkling,
lasi-lasi-lasi, (1) a man may truly fear when he sees you!

Give them meat, that they may all eat! Give your men the foreleg.

[142]



Muhlala, the Chief of the Nema clan. Phot. A. Bond.

give them the hindleg, that they may all eat to their hearts' content...
Pull their legs forward (ba loko milenge), so that they fall back in
terror of you!

Why do you govern them so mildly! Look at them with trouble

(1) Descriptive adverb.

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339 eyes! You are a coward! The Bveshaa want to kill you! Act with
bravery and defend yourself!

Muhlaba Dabuka! Men are coming, oxen are coming. You are on the top of the hills, you are like heaven which roars... The lightning is like you, it is full of strength, it is terrible! Your saliva is white, your eyes are beaming, your face is elongated, your body is like the stone of gold (auriferous quartz); your fingers are long. You are known in every country. At Gungunyana, they know you. At Ngwana (Swaziland), they know you. The Zulus know you! At Mosilikatse, they know you. You are like the grass on the road: when people trample on it, they crush it to the ground, but when the rain comes, it grows again and covers the earth. You are like the water of the river, how beautiful! The water is clear and pure, though impurities may float upon it, they pass away and the water is pure again!

The Bveshaa weep at Sikokoro's kraal! (1) They weep at Sikho-chummi's! You have taken their charms! You have sprinkled your warriors with them. Muhlaba, you have beaten them with the shaft of the assegai, your men crossed the river, they went to kill the enemies in their own kraal!

You are like the ostrich feather, the white one, very white, or the red one of the bird which cries taw-tawe, the bird called rivi, which adorns the chiefs!

At Nyasin, (2) they dispute chieftainship (banga buhosi); they are going to kill each other. Mapakomo says: "It is mine!" Muholo says: "It is mine!" Shirundju (3) took him (Muhlaba) in his arms... Mankhelu is like the duiker antelope! They catch him by the ear and he escapes from their hands! He is like the water of the well: they draw it off... it springs up again and fills up the well. (Viz., Mankhelu is never tired when defending the cause of Muhlaba.)

Run, go and tell Mandlamakulu, Shihuvane's brother: The

(1) In 1901, there was a Native war in which Muhlaba and the Puli chief Mangu fought against their neighbour Shikwero and his ally Sikukhukhu, heir of Sekukuni. On the 7th of November a fierce battle took place in Shihuvane where the assailants were repulsed and more than forty of them were killed. (See App. X)

(2) Here Mowveve makes an allusion to the circumstances in which Muhlaba took over the chieftainship and which have been explained when dealing with the law of succession. The capital of the tribe was still at Nyasin, at that time, viz., in the hills near New Agatha. (See page 413.)

(3) One of the great councillors who took the part of Muhlaba as did also Mandlamakulu and Shikukhukhu.

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power belongs to me." Run, go and tell Mpapalati: "The power is mine." Run, go and tell Mulondjo: "The power is mine!" (1)

Such is the laudatory song of Mawewe, one of the great men at the Nkuna court. Undoubtedly this is one of the best examples of Thonga poetry and a characteristic piece of primitive literature. In the savage tribe the mbongi is the prototype of the poet laureate of civilised Courts. But there is yet another functionary to be considered, whose duties are still more strange than those of the herald.

IV. *The Public Vituperator.*

(Shitale sha tiko.)

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This is a kind of Court Jester who has the right of casting the vilest insults, the most disgraceful accusations in the teeth of any and all the Natives of the country. He never abuses strangers, but as long as he confines his vituperations to his own countrymen, he enjoys perfect immunity.

Even the chief is not safe from his attacks; he dares to say anything! "Just see him arriving in your village," said Tobane to me, in his picturesque language. "He begins shouting out the most frightful things. He accuses you of incest, of taking your own sisters as wives! Even if he sees you talking to your 'great sister-in-law,' whom your wife's brother married with your oxen, whom you treat with the greatest respect, he will not hesitate to pass remarks which will make you blush with shame! He will go and take the food you are cooking, will even snatch from the chief's hands the meat he is eating... So, when you see him coming to your village, you hasten to meet him and take him a present to try and avoid having to listen to his horrible insults. Sometimes the *shitale* of the country behaves

(1) Qualities of the words of *Mulondjo* himself, who sent messengers to all his under, to all the petty chiefs under him, to announce officially that he had assumed the chieftainship.

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himself quite nicely, stays in his own village and attends the national assemblies as quietly as any other person, but, once he begins to rattle off his vituperations, beware! Nothing will stop him! He respects nothing, human or divine!" The Court Jester is of undoubted Thonga origin, as old as the tribe itself, according to Tobane. The position is official and even hereditary. At Zihlahla it was Nwachapane who held the extraordinary post of Public Vituperator. In Nondwane it was Mutjunkwa of the Shibindji family. He insulted the chief with the word: "Musaathanyoko." There was also a woman who dared to do the same to Maphunga.

It is difficult to understand the *raison d'être* of this strange institution. Is the *shitale* a public censor, to whom the tribe entrusts the privilege of calling attention to facts which others would

not dare to bring to light? Is there some analogy between this "fool" of an African Court and Triboulet? (1) I cannot say.



Phot. P. Bothoud.
Melwele, the dwarf.

(1) In this connection I reproduce from a photograph, taken at Shiluvane in 1885, the portrait of a remarkable personage who was not a Thonga but a Pedi, a subject of the chief Moaghe. Although this extraordinary dwarf did not act officially as the Vituperator, he was widely famed for his witty sayings and his incomparable mimicry. The Native Commissioner took him to Pretoria and Johannesburg some years ago as a curiosity, and it seems that he was exhibited for money! The name of this little man is Melwele, a veritable ethnographic phenomenon, although he is not exactly the Public Vituperator of the country.

C. SUNDRY COURT CUSTOMS

644 The paraphernalia of royalty are very modest in the Thonga courts. However there are some to be mentioned in addition to the regalia which I have described.

1. *The Big Drum (Muntshintshi).*

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237 This is found in every capital, even sometimes in the sub-chief's villages. It is made of a hollowed stem, somewhat like an ordinary mortar; or it may be rounded, and even provided with three legs, as in Nondwane; a piece of skin is stretched over the opening. This may be the skin of an elephant's ear, of a buffalo, of an ox or of an antelope *manguhoe*. This instrument is subject to some taboos; when the skin cracks, it is forbidden to look inside. There is something mysterious about it and nobody must disclose that mystery. People say that a bullet is introduced into it when it is made. In Shiluvane they asserted that the skull of the hostile chief, Sikororo, killed in the battle of Nov. 1901, had been put into the big drum! At any rate, there is a special individual who is summoned to repair it and he receives a fowl as reward.

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202 The big drum is beaten on various occasions :
a) To announce a great fatality, especially the death of a chief, or the day of the publication of the mourning; also the approach of the inundation, when the Nkomati river rises, in January or February, and threatens to cover the whole land; again when the bush fire threatens to destroy the capital.

b) To summon warriors to the capital in case of imminent war.

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534 c) To execute various musical performances. The big drum leads a special dance (nkino), which takes place at the capital during the winter, when the harvest is ended, and the country happy and prosperous. It is accompanied by a smaller drum (shikolombane) which is called the "son" of the big one. The

533 644 *shikolambane* is more elongated and has no legs. Its sound is high and piercing, while the tone of the *muntshintshi* is deep and low. The music proper of this dance is provided by the *bunanga*.

II. The *Bunanga*.

533 644 This is the regular *band*, which is met with in every royal clan. The word comes from *nanga*, trumpet (pl. *tinanga*). But the trumpets composing the *bunanga* are not the common pierced tibias of goats used by the herdboys. They are larger horns of the *mhalamhala* (*Hippotragus Niger*), or of the *mhala* (Zulu *impala*), pierced at their base in such a way that they produce different tones. These instruments are made by specialists, (it was *Nwamatshomane* in Nondwane), so as to form a kind of orchestra (*simo*) composed of ten instruments. To play them is a veritable art. The players stand round the two drumbeaters. The big drum gives the time: when it beats slowly, "tu-tu-tu," the ten musicians must dance in a ring, viz., they must march after each other, playing, making certain grimaces and gesticulations. When the drum beats more slowly and more softly, they must retire in a line and march slowly. The drum quickens the time: then they come to the centre once more and dance in a ring, quicker and quicker. The executants follow each other in a given order, the largest and deepest horn being in front, the smallest and highest toned one at the end of the group. Sometimes three or four orchestras perform at the same time (1).

The *bunanga* is an old Ronga custom and is very picturesque indeed. As for its musical importance, I shall refer to it again in Part V.

533 609 (1) I remember having heard the *bunanga* practising in the various sub-classes of Nondwane in 1891, as each sub-chief had his own. They were preparing to go to the capital to mourn Maphanga whose death had just been announced. I saw the *bunanga* performing its best melody before Lord Selborne, when he came to pay a visit to the Portuguese settlement of Morakwen in 1906. The Administrator had acquired a "*batanga*" for him (the name given by the Portuguese to these native dances), and the warriors of Nondwane did their best to interest the White Chiefs!

533 fight, when returned from battle, as well as those sung during the march of the troop. I give the striking music of some of these in the next chapter. Tune 24 is the "Sabela nkosi" the great Mpfumo song, also adopted by other clans. Tune 25, with its splendid change from the minor to the major key, is the Tembe and Maputju classical war song. No. 29 is an old Nkuna war song, dating as far back as 1820, before the Zulu invasion; No. 27 is the principal modern Nkuna song, and 535 No. 28 the Nkuna equivalent to the Ronga *Giraffe* song. These old chants are sung to the accompaniment of the military dance, which consists in trampling on the ground, while rhythmically brandishing the assagais, lifting them first to the right, then to the left, bending them sideways, then downwards, as if to pierce (I. p. 463). They are certainly wonderfully fine compositions.

533 I include in the same category the laudatory song of the *mbongi* (I. p. 424), a branch of literature in which Court poets display considerable imagination and an extraordinary gift for unbounded hyperbole. All the important chiefs have their *mbongi* and it is required of the man holding this office that he should have a good chest (*shifuba*), the chest being to the Thongas the seat of eloquence (as it was to the ancient Romans: *Pectus est quod oratorem facit!*). The elucidations of these poet laureates sometimes last a very long time and may have real poetic value.

614 As we saw (I. p. 361) each clan and even each family 553 possesses its own laudatory phrase; this is the *shibongo*, a word which generally means family name, but which etymologically signifies the formula by which the clan or family glorifies (*bonga*) itself. These formulae are usually short and often contain archaic expressions or allusions to unknown facts which make them very difficult to understand. I have given some of those from the Ronga territory. Here are two others, collected by the Rev. A. Jaques amongst the Transvaal Thongas, who seem to cultivate this custom more than the coast clans; they are perhaps encouraged to do so by their Pedi neighbours, who are very fond of these formulae, called by them *mireto*.